

BACKGROUND INFO		ORGANISATIONAL BACKGROUND
Interview Ref.	Analysed by	Type and purpose of organisation
EAALNI_10	CS	<p>Dept for communities - largest govt department in NI. Wide range of responsibilities including housing, social inclusion, finding employment.</p> <p>Interviewee in work and wellbeing division: main focus on disability employment programmes</p>

EEALNI_1	MP	<p>Open College Network NI - works with employer and providers to design and validate vocational qualifications.</p> <p>Interviewee Vice-Chair. Previous experience in health, wellbeing and social care sectors.</p>
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EAALNI_3	MP	<p>Centre for Flexible Education at Ulster University.</p> <p>Manage flexible framework for recognition of foundation, ug and pg degrees, credits and diplomas.</p>
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EAALNI_4	MP	<p>Business in the Community.</p> <p>Charity and membership org. for companies with commitment to CSR. 260 employer members in NI, mainly larger orgs.</p>
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EAALNI_5	MP	<p>Invest NI.</p> <p>Regional economic development agency. Supports ~3000 companies (mainly financial and professional service SMEs) who export or are looking to export and who want to expand. Support for training and other capacity development measures e.g. IT.</p> <p>Activities to attract foreign investment into NI.</p>
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EAALNI_6	MP	<p data-bbox="568 154 935 181">Irish Congress of Trade Unions</p> <p data-bbox="568 230 1090 293">Umbrella org. for trade unions. 44 affiliated unions in Northern Ireland and Ireland.</p>
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EAALNI_12	MP	<p>Department of the Economy</p> <p>Interviewee 1 director of Skills Division.</p> <p>Interviewee 2 head of Economic Social Inclusion Team, focus on programmes for NEETs and economically inactive.</p>
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Identify challenges facing NI labour market (list)	<b>Low pay:</b> Driving factors (financial, structural, cultural), Consequences (individual, employers, economy), groups affected	<b>Low skills:</b> Driving factors (financial, structural, cultural), Consequences (individual, employers, economy), groups affected
Main labour challenge discussed / relevant to their portfolio is economic inactivity		

<p>Education underachievement leading to:</p> <p>Low skill level in workforce (particularly at levels 3 and 4)</p> <p>Reduced competitiveness and productivity</p> <p>"I think the challenge for us is to help the government and policy makers to understand that alongside growing the qualifications and the skills and the economic capital of our people, we also need to grow the social and human capital of our people and those are two sides of the one coin. You can't hope to achieve one without the other, especially when you are talking about those that have traditionally been left behind."</p>		<p>Driving factors: educational under-achievement caused by lack of joined-up or coherent approach to learning.</p> <p>Limited entry-routes into skills provision for those most disadvantaged, "left behind", with few or no qualifications.</p> <p><b>Consequences:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Individual - low self-esteem and confidence, reduced investment in community.</li> <li>&gt; Employers - low skill level in workforce (especially at level 3 and 4).</li> <li>&gt; Economy - reduced competitiveness and productivity.</li> </ul> <p>Groups affected: academic low achievers.</p>
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<p>Low pay and in-work poverty.</p> <p>Skills shortages and oversupplies.</p> <p>Lack of progression in SMEs.</p>	<p>Low pay and in work poverty still an issue in context of decreased unemployment.</p> <p><b>Consequences (individual):</b> A barrier to reentry into education and these types of employers will also not support employees to engage in learning.</p>	<p>Shortage of computing and engineering graduates and oversupply of other professionals such as teachers.</p> <p>Differences in funding for apprenticeships between NI and rest of UK. Apprenticeship levys only just rolled out in NI and no Digital Apprenticeship Service. Employers therefore less keen to engage.</p> <p>Note young people increasingly looking towards work-based routes rather than academic routes into HE.</p> <p>Refer to NI Skills Barometer as good source of info.</p>
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<p>Low pay leading to in-work poverty</p> <p>Skills shortages</p> <p>Risk of unemployment for low-skilled workers caused by automation</p> <p>Young people from deprived areas and/or low education attainment have limited opportunities to enter work and progress</p> <p>High levels of poor mental health, especially among young people</p> <p>High levels of economic inactivity</p>	<p>In-work poverty a big problem. Particular issues relating to debt and migration onto UC (currently paused).</p> <p>&gt; May be a disincentive to work. &gt; A negative impact on communities as some groups feel left behind exacerbating tensions. &gt; Negative impacts on employers, as employees struggling financially less productive.</p>	<p>Skills shortages. Employers report difficulty recruiting applicants for work-based training opportunities. "...pretty much no matter what sector we're talking to skills is very much on the boardroom agenda"</p> <p>This is contributing to NI's low productivity when compared to the rest of the UK and the EU.</p> <p>Increased automation presents a risk to jobs and incomes of those in low-skilled work.</p>
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<p>Lack of labour supply (particularly at levels 3-5)</p> <p>Undersupply of quantitative/IT skills at higher level.</p> <p>Deficit of employability, leadership and management skills.</p> <p>Low productivity.</p>		<p>1. Levels 3-5: significant undersupply for agri-food, hospitality, tourism, manufacturing industries.</p> <p><b>Drivers:</b> Reduction in availability of migrant labour. Low employment so looking to economically inactive to fill the gap.</p> <p>2. Levels 6-8: sufficient numbers but undersupply of quantitative/IT skills.</p> <p>3. Deficit of employability skills such as problem solving, verbal communication etc.</p> <p><b>Consequences (individuals):</b> May harm ability to transfer to different jobs/employers.</p> <p>4. Deficit of leadership and management skills.</p>
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<p>Low pay. Especially among women and part-time workers.</p> <p>Limited provision for upskilling and learning orientated to personal development, health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Loss of skilled workers through Voluntary Exit Scheme, not replaced.</p> <p>Lack of progression, particularly for agency workers.</p>	<p>Low pay for those in work a big problem.</p> <p><b>Groups:</b> particularly affects women and those in part-time employment.</p> <p><b>Consequences (individuals):</b> Leads to increase in hours squeezing free-time and making it difficult to find time for training/learning. Financial pressure makes it difficult to prioritise learning, focus on meeting essential expenses.</p> <p><b>Drivers:</b> Public sector budget cuts.</p>	<p>1. Lack of availability of upskilling provision.</p> <p>Industry training limited to mandatory requirements like health and safety.</p> <p><b>Drivers:</b> Employers only paying lip service to upskilling. Lack of time-off for training. Unwilling to consult with employees about what they want. Harmful to employee involvement and motivation.</p> <p>Public sector budget cuts, training susceptible to be axed.</p> <p><b>Consequences (individuals):</b> Lack of skills has intergenerational effects. Limits ability to pass on skills and support education of children.</p> <p>2. Loss of skilled workers in the civil service who haven't been replaced.</p>
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<p>Low pay</p> <p>Low skills/skills shortages</p> <p>Underemployment and precarious employment</p> <p>Labour shortages</p>	<p>Low pay.</p> <p><b>Drivers:</b> Reliance on agriculture, agri-food industries. Low skills &gt; low productivity &gt; low pay.</p> <p><b>Consequences:</b> Exacerbation of community tensions. <i>"It's not good for the citizens who are perhaps in low-skilled, low-paid precarious work and that affects society where there are issues which are peculiar to Northern Ireland, and the post-conflict situation can be exacerbated by people who are unemployed, under-employed and may have low-self-esteem and other issues like that. "</i></p>	<p>A large proportion of the workforce has low or no skills. Tend to be older workers.</p> <p>Skills shortages identified by employers. Need for upskilling in management, leadership and vocational skills.</p> <p><b>Drivers:</b> Reliance on agriculture, agri-food industries.</p> <p><b>Consequences (economy):</b> Low productivity compared to rest of UK. Low pay.</p>
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**R MARKET**

<b>Quality of work:</b> Driving factors (financial, structural, cultural), Consequences (individual, employers, economy), groups affected	<b>Progression:</b> Driving factors (financial, structural, cultural), Consequences (individual, employers, economy), groups affected	<b>Other:</b> Driving factors (financial, structural, cultural), Consequences (individual, employers, economy), groups affected
		Economic inactivity: whilst u/e is very low, economic inactivity is very high - large number of individuals not engaging with labour market.

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	<p>Large proportion of employers are SMEs and many are very small. Lack of infrastructure for progression opportunities.</p> <p>Noted a particular issues around lack of opportunities for teaching assistants to progress. Need for initiatives and lobbying to professionalise this role and develop routes for progression.</p>	
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	<p>Lack of progression opportunities for young people from deprived areas with low educational attainment and skills.</p>	<p>Unemployment figures low but economic inactivity an issue. This group could fill skill shortages in labour market, but need support to do so.</p> <p>Mental health, especially among young people. Noted impact of low pay on wellbeing.</p> <p>Geographical inequalities. Even though lots of targetted govt. and EU initiatives, still poor literacy, numeracy in deprived areas. Leading to poor social mobility and intergenerational unemployment.</p> <p>Low educational attainment, especially children from deprived areas. Many employers ask for 5 GCSEs inc. English and Maths limiting job opportunities for this group.</p> <p>Community tensions have impact on children and young people who may not access</p>
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		<p>Size of NI creates infrastructure challenges. Invest NI therefore targets the knowledge economy requiring high level skills.</p> <p>Low productivity.</p>
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<p>Prevalence of stress and anxiety-related mental health problems among workers.</p> <p><b>Drivers:</b> long working hours, low pay.</p>	<p>1. Lack of in-work progression.</p> <p><b>Groups:</b> particularly affects agency workers.</p> <p><b>Consequences (employers):</b> A false economy for employers, training agency workers who then leave after short period.</p> <p><b>Consequences (individuals):</b> Demotivation, stress and anxiety related mental health problems.</p>	
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<p>Issues of underemployment and precarious employment.</p>		<p>Low levels of unemployment, labour shortage (particularly in engineering and fabrication).</p> <p><b>Drivers:</b> Many economic migrants choosing to move to Ireland (better pay and conditions) or their countries of origin. Improving economies in Eastern Europe and Brexit uncertainty.</p> <p><b>Consequences:</b> Therefore, focus is on the economically inactive.</p>
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	A cohort of individuals with low or no qualifications, in employment who would benefit from entry level to level one programmes.	Economic inactivity

<b>PROV</b>		
<b>List provision / influencing activity:</b> Brief description of support / initiatives provided by organisation	SUPPORT 1: Nature of support/activity, key features, groups targeted, funders, impact	SUPPORT 2: Nature of support/activity, key features, groups targeted, funders, impact
<p>Provision identified by interviewee not focussed on progression, instead focused on helping individuals move into or retain employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Employability Northern Ireland</li> <li>&gt;Steps to success</li> </ul> <p>Support for individuals with health conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Condition Management programme</li> <li>&gt;Access to work</li> <li>&gt;Workable Ni</li> </ul> <p>All programmes funded by government</p> <p>Dept also provides public matched funding to 17 ESF programmes specific to individuals with disabilities (pre-employment support)</p>	<p>Employability Northern Ireland - programme of support to help individuals move into employment</p>	<p>Steps to success</p>

<p>OCN NI works with providers, employers and individuals to develop programmes of learning which can validated as vocational qualifications or credits.</p>	<p>Individuals, providers or employers can approach directly.</p> <p>Development of programme of learning in collaboration with providers, employers and learners. Includes traditional vocational learning e.g. NVQs as well as personal development/employability. Use holistic outcome measures rather than exam-based or activity-based measures.</p> <p>Quality controlled approach to support learning (largely non-traditional) to help them evidence achievements</p> <p>Do not provide learning, but externally validate provision under national qualifications and credits framework.</p>	<p>Work in schools relation to Entitlement Framework [sets out minimum number and range of courses schools in NI legally obligated to offer at KS4 and Post-16, 1/3 must be applied courses]. Not explicit in interview, but from website - OCN validates vocation and technical courses available through the Entitlement Framework.</p>
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<p>Employer initiated programmes: Curriculum designed with employers and delivered in cohorts.</p> <p>Individual take-up: Flexible/modular programmes at range of levels.</p> <p>APEL route (community development): Confidence building and HE readiness programme.</p> <p>Work-based learning projects: Range of voluntary opportunities and internships for students.</p> <p>Apprenticeships: Accreditation of apprenticeships.</p>	<p>Employer initiated take-up: Shift from individual to employer initiated take-up.</p> <p>Engage with employers in shortage skill areas to design or transform relevant curriculum in partnership.</p> <p>Also design tailored courses for cohorts of employees. Only accessible to that cohort. Mixture of young people and adult learners.</p> <p>Also accredit employer in-house training for larger employers.</p>	<p>Individual initiated take-up: Advertised online through employers, colleges and other external orgs.</p> <p>CFE use a modular approach/flexible framework which allows learners to try out subject areas and change their mind.</p>
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<p>Employers' Forum: Work with employers to facilitate work-based programmes for unemployed.</p> <p>Education and Jobs Task and Finish Group: Forum for employers discussion around education and access.</p> <p>Disability: Information sessions and support guide aiming to improve recruitment and progression for disabled people.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing: Coferences, frameworks and toolkits for employers.</p> <p>Futureproof (England): Activities to improve recruitment and selection processes for young unemployed people.</p>	<p>Employers' Forum</p> <p>Active between 2003-2018.</p> <p>Worked with range of employers in different sectors to develop iniatives for unemployed people e.g. customised work experience, often linked to recruitment campaigns.</p> <p>Moved 2,000 (mostly long term) unemployed into work.</p>	<p>Education and Jobs Task and Finish Group</p> <p>Meetings with employers to identify issues relating to education and jobs and opportunities for employers to have impact. Also hosted experts to input into discussions. Due to conclude April 2019.</p>
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<p>Assured Skills Programme: Graduate conversion to IT sector</p> <p>Bridge to Employment: Pre-employment training interventions.</p> <p>Skills Advancement Grants: Skills assessment and upskilling support for SMEs.</p> <p>Collaborative Support: Skills assessment and upskilling support at sector level.</p> <p>Leadership and management development: Executive coaching and development of peer networks.</p>	<p>Assured Skills Programme</p> <p>Fast track conversion programme for graduates from humanities subjects to move into the IT sector.</p>	<p>Bridge to Employment</p> <p>Identify skills in demand, co-design pre-employment training interventions with business.</p>
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<p>Union learning rep activities: Signpost to learning opportunities. Arrange access to courses/training.</p> <p>Essential skills training for civil service.</p> <p>Redundancy support: Referral to career services. Assessment of skills needs.</p> <p>Employment support service.</p>	<p>Union learning reps. Generally, at least one per branch or employer.</p> <p>Reps have legally protected time off for sourcing learning initiatives.</p> <p>Union learning fund from Department for the Economy (£250,000). Unions bid for funding based on target outcomes. Can be used for members and other staff. Supports about 100/year.</p> <p>Might be used to facilitate networks and training for union learning reps.</p> <p>Use learner surveys to gauge workers learning needs.</p> <p>Primarily signpost members to learning opportunities. Or set up</p>	<p>Essential skills</p> <p>Work with civil service. Focused on IT skills (also beneficial for personal life, financial health).</p>
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<p>InnovateUS - training support for small companies.</p> <p>Skills Focus - training support for larger companies.</p> <p>Business Improvement Techniques</p> <p>Family support - may include in-work progression support.</p> <p>Support for part-time learning grants to FE/HE and loans to learners</p>	<p>InnovateUS</p> <p>Companies with &lt;50 employees.</p> <p>Support to develop skills for innovation (new to the company). Can lead onto further support for innovation such as voucher for advice/facilities supplied by colleges or universities.</p> <p>Don't track progression or pay after intervention due to issues around data protection.</p> <p>Evaluation ongoing.</p>	<p>Skills Focus</p> <p>Companies with &lt;250 employees.</p> <p>Support business-related training, accredited by FE colleges. Employers contribute 1/4 of cost.</p> <p>Can lead onto innovation funding from the dept.</p> <p>Don't track progression or pay after intervention due to issues around data protection.</p> <p>Evaluation ongoing.</p>
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<b>VISION (by organisation/department)</b>		
SUPPORT 3: Nature of support/activity, key features, groups targeted, funders, impact	SUPPORT 4: Nature of support/activity, key features, groups targeted, funders, impact	SUPPORT 5: Nature of support/activity, key features, groups targeted, funders, impact
<p>Condition Management programme - support individuals with health conditions move into employment.</p> <p>Provided by Northern Ireland Health and social care Trust</p> <p>For individuals receiving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and health-related Universal Credit (UC)</p>	<p>Access to Work - help individuals in work overcome disabilities via practical support (funded offer)</p>	<p>Workable NI - supports individuals and employers to meet vocational needs and overcome barriers that may prevent individuals from staying in work.</p>

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<p>APEL route (community development):</p> <p>Cross-sector, confidence building and HE readiness. Learners build portfolio of experience.</p> <p>Includes individuals seeking recognition for former experience to get into appropriate level of employment.</p>	<p>Work-based learning projects:</p> <p>Law clinics in Belfast and Magee. Students provide pro bono work for vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Science Shop: Connects VCS orgs and student researchers to solve community problems. 330 students engaged in 2017/18 e.g. design digital campaign for NSPCC. Also functions to market learning to members of VCS orgs.</p> <p>Post-graduate internship scheme, mainly in SMEs. Employers report positive impact of profits.</p>	<p>Apprenticeships:</p> <p>See info on funding in 'Low Skills'. Demand for work-based learning, but employers not eager to engage as they need to top up the funding themselves.</p>
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<p>Health and wellbeing</p> <p>Frameworks and toolkits for employers.</p> <p>Run conferences in partnership with Public Health Agency on different themes.</p>	<p>Disability</p> <p>Information sessions in next 6-9 months. Inform employers about issues surrounding disability and employment.</p> <p>Support guide on recruitment and progression of people with disabilities.</p>	<p>National BITC work:</p> <p>Futureproof (ran in England, looking to bring to NI)</p> <p>Youth unemployment framework. Aim to raise awareness of opportunities. And modernise recruitment and selection processes to reach unemployed young people especially those in vulnerable groups. E.g. young people giving feedback on recruitment materials and processes.</p> <p>Funded by City &amp; Guilds.</p> <hr/> <p>In-work poverty (BITC London):</p> <p>Challenge employers to pay living wage or higher and support to develop</p>
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<p>Skills Advancement Grants</p> <p>Assess skills needs of companies and how those align with corporate and business objectives.</p> <p>Financially assist companies to deliver a training plan, upskilling existing employees (skills growth programmes).</p>	<p>Collaborative Support</p> <p>Fund facilitators to bring companies together at sector level to work together (collaborative network funding).</p> <p>Use network to identify needs across sector and collaborate with FE and HE providers to develop sector-wide upskilling programme.</p> <p>May also lead to skills growth programmes with individual companies.</p>	<p>Leadership and management development</p> <p>Mix of executive education and coaching and development of peer networks.</p>
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<p>Redundancy support</p> <p>Support for individuals being made redundant e.g. Electoral Services.</p> <p>Referrals to career service, assessment of essential skills needs.</p>	<p>Employment support service</p> <p>Advice for individuals who need adjustments or support at work due to health or disability.</p>	
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<p>Business Improvement Techniques (ended)</p> <p>Manufacturing sector.</p> <p>Short working time during recession.</p> <p>Used downtime for practical training to develop methods to improve processes and reduce waste. Lead to qualification.</p>	<p>Family support:</p> <p>Provision of family support through ESF funding.</p> <p>Part of support may include helping household members to move into more secure, better paid employment.</p>	<p>Support for part-time learning</p> <p>Grants to FE and HE sector specifically to provide part-time options.</p> <p>Provision of loans for part-time training and Masters.</p>
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	EXTERNAL PROVISION		
Key lessons from existing provision: enabling factors, barriers, etc	<b>List provision / influencing activity:</b> Brief description of external support / initiatives	SUPPORT 1: Nature of external support/activity, key features, groups targeted, funders, impact	SUPPORT 2: Nature of external support/activity, key features, groups targeted, funders, impact
<p>Support is largely focussed on tackling inactivity and maintaining employment, rather than focussing on progression - HOWEVER, one of the central themes of the NI strategy for people w/disabilities is progression.</p> <p>Current support makes use of range of methods e.g. direct support and access funds, range of providers (public and contracted specialist)</p> <p>Supported employment model works well for individuals with disabilities</p>	Not aware of any relevant provision		

<p>OCN's broader approach to learning extending to social and human capital beneficial to promote learner motivation and engagement. This is due to the focus on wider benefits to the individual and community rather than just the commercial interests of employers.</p> <p>Employers are more interested in soft skills and motivation rather than traditional academic outputs.</p> <p>The intervention needs to meet the needs of all stakeholders (providers, funders and learners) to be sustainable.</p> <p>Barriers to extending this approach due to siloed funding and attachment to traditional measures of success.</p>	<p>Family learning initiatives/Sure Start</p> <p>City and Guilds</p> <p>Release your potential initiative (no longer available due to funding)</p>	<p>Family learning initiatives/Sure Start</p> <p>Some good practice, but not at scale or coherent.</p>	<p>City and Guilds</p> <p>Similar role to OCN validating vocation training, but use of more traditional, exam-based measures of success.</p>
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<p><b>Enablers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Partnership with employers. Important that partnership is authentic and extends to curriculum design as well as delivery, delivery and assessment.</li> <li>&gt; Student support around personal, emotional and social issues e.g. University 'mind your mood' campaign, appointment of director of campus life.</li> <li>&gt; Flexible module system which lets learners try out different areas of study more suitable for adult learners.</li> <li>&gt; Engagement with communities (inc. schools, businesses, parents) to develop curriculum.</li> </ul> <p><b>Barriers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Issues with transport links to the campus sites. Important as many students in work. But development of new city-based campus.</li> </ul>	<p>Local area based FE colleges.</p> <p>Private providers.</p> <p>Community Organisations.</p>	<p>Local area based FE colleges.</p> <p>To access, potential learners need to have chosen area of learning.</p> <p>However, CFE experience that adult learners need information and confidence-building to make this choice.</p>	<p>Some community orgs deliver level 2 and 3 training, accredited by CFE OCN or colleges.</p>
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<p><b>Enablers:</b> &gt;Collaborative working between BITC and employers appeared to have been successful e.g. Employers' Forum.</p> <p><b>Barriers:</b> &gt;Reluctance on part of employers to change their recruitment practices to improve recruitment and progression of disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>&gt;Employers low level of knowledge about apprenticeship framework and relevant govt. initiatives, leading to low take-up.</p>	<p>Department for the Economy/ Department for Communities: Campaign to increase employers knowledge around apprenticeships.</p> <p>Sectoral bodies VCS and private training providers.</p>	<p>Department for the Economy and Department for Communities. Campaign to increase employers awareness and knowledge of apprentices, especially higher level apprenticeships.</p> <p>Launching a new range of initiatives from 2020.</p>	<p>Sectoral bodies e.g. Construction Employers Federation. Reduction in number of this type of org.</p> <p>Dialogue with members to identify skills gaps and co-ordinate govt. lobbying for better provision.</p>
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<p>Projects appraised from perspective of economic development - skills transferable beyond company. Unlikely to support projects were benefit only to the employer.</p> <p>Track increase in profit and sales to demonstrate impact.</p> <p><b>Barriers:</b>  &gt; Some employers concerned that upskilling (particularly with qualifications) might lead to employees being 'poached' by competitors.</p> <p>&gt; Affordability of programmes to employers.</p> <p><b>Enabler:</b> Financial assistance to reduce cost to employer.</p> <p>&gt; Companies don't recognise the potential ROI of upskilling.</p> <p><b>Enabler:</b> Use case studies to communicate benefits.</p>	<p>Department for the Economy:  Skills programmes via FE colleges and for companies.</p> <p>Local authorities:  Support for upskilling.</p> <p>Trade/sectoral bodies:  Support for upskilling.</p>	<p>Department for the Economy</p> <p>Skills focused programmes delivered through FE colleges.</p> <p>Innovate Us - upskilling support for companies with fewer than 50 employees.</p>	<p>Local authorities</p> <p>Support for upskilling.</p>
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<p><b>Enablers:</b>  &gt; Trade unions role in negotiating training curriculum and paid time-off for learning.</p> <p><b>Barriers:</b>  &gt; Employer's culture important, influences employees attitudes towards learning. <i>"...but if that culture's not there and it's not, I suppose, enforced by the employer people tend to sit back then and go, I don't need it."</i></p> <p>&gt; Adult learning perceived as like going back to school. Offputting for those with negative experiences.</p> <p>&gt; Stigma attached to essential skills training, particularly English and Maths. However, ICT can pull employees in.</p> <p>&gt; Poor physical or mental health or underlying disability which hasn't been diagnosed e.g. dyslexia. Can prevent access to learning.</p>	<p>Civil Service, Centre for Applied Learning.</p> <p>FE Colleges</p> <p>Other trade union funds</p>	<p>Civil Service, Centre for Applied Learning</p> <p>Workers didn't want to participate in these courses as off the shelf and not relevant to their work.</p>	<p>FE Colleges</p> <p>Minimum number for a course is 10. Can limit ability to provide relevant courses to union members. ICTU try to link members together to meet minimum course size even if in different unions.</p>
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<p><b>Enablers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Raising awareness of availability of support among employers.</li> <li>&gt; FE colleges key in assessing training needs and designing suitable training programmes.</li> <li>&gt; 'Business improvement techniques' more palatable to business than formal training.</li> </ul> <p><b>Barriers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Some employers unwilling to make a contribution to the cost and/or release staff for training. Reduces participation.</li> <li>&gt; Staff at FE colleges may not have experience/knowledge of business needs and ability to engage effectively with employers.</li> <li>&gt; 'Speculative training' not good value for money. If not linked to demand, individuals may move out of NI to find relevant work.</li> </ul>	<p>Employer-funded training.</p> <p>Dept. of Communities. In-work progression support.</p> <p>Invest NI. Funding for training.</p>	<p>Employer-funded training provided by FE and HE sector.</p>	<p>Dept. of Communities</p> <p>Programmes for benefit recipients who are in work.</p> <p>Provision of advice and guidance. Direct to training opportunities.</p>
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SUPPORT 3: Nature of external support/activity, key features, groups targeted, funders, impact	Key lessons from existing external provision: enabling factors, barriers, etc	<b>Gaps in current provision?</b> What changes to NI landscape would be considered beneficial?
		Big gap is support helping individuals to progress in work - main focus of provision at the moment is current tackling inactivity

<p>Release Your Potential Initiative</p> <p>Former programme in health sector, validated by OCN and evaluated by London Southbank Uni.</p> <p>Also noted generally some good practice in health, wellbeing and social care where learning used as part of recovery programme e.g. Action Mental Health.</p>		<p>Generally, lack of joined-up approach e.g. no advice and guidance service to inform learners of available provision, funding in silos by different govt. depts.</p> <p>"We don't have a coherent approach; we have a siloed approach where different bits of the government machine provide funding to meet the activity targets that are set within their silo."</p> <p>Lack of funding for non-traditional approaches, such as those provided by VCS.</p> <p>Lack of foundation level courses, taking holistic view of learning in order to engage those furthest away from upskilling pathways in learning.</p> <p>Not sharing good practise between areas where support is available (although limited evidence where progression support is available)</p> <p>General lack of availability of</p>
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<p>Private providers delivering vocational training.</p>		<p>Recent increase in asylum seekers and economic migrants. ESOL system not as developed as in England.</p> <p>A greater variety of loan options needed to support adult learners from low income households.</p> <p>Implied funding is limiting outreach work with schools in disadvantaged areas to inform about FE and HE. More funding for this work.</p>
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<p>VCS and private training providers.</p> <p>Funding from govt. and EU. Noted that funding from EU enables more innovative provision.</p>	<p><b>Enablers:</b>  &gt; Employers increasingly working together to develop solutions. In the past, this was seen as threat to competitiveness.</p> <p><b>Barriers:</b>  &gt; Work on economic activity does not seem to have been impactful. Need for more innovative solutions.</p>	<p>Need for pre-employment support for economically inactive whereas current provision focused on upskilling the unemployed.</p> <p>Employers should do more work themselves to reach out to economically inactive and disadvantaged groups e.g. through changes to their recruitment and selection processes.</p> <p>Need for activities to increase knowledge and take-up of apprenticeship related initiatives by employers.</p> <p>Need for employers to upskill their low-skill workers to mitigate risks of automation.</p>
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<p>Trade/sectoral bodies e.g. Construction Industry Training Board</p>	<p>&gt; FE colleges seen as better at building employability skills than the school system.</p>	<p>&gt; Lack of visibility of available support to individuals and businesses. <i>"I don't think we're short of supports. But maybe they're not as evident to those who could avail of them..."</i></p>
<p>Support for upskilling</p>	<p>&gt; The needs of businesses not always met by public sector training providers (colleges and universities). This affects employers attitudes towards those providers.</p> <p>&gt; Argues need for stronger alignment between public sector training and industry needs.</p>	<p>&gt; Need for programmes which target economically inactive. Potential for collaboration with Depts. for Communities and the Economy.</p> <p>&gt; Project-based learning to improve employability skills, potential to improve productivity.</p>

<p>Other trade union funds</p> <p>Larger trade unions (e.g. Unite, Unison) will have dedicated learning funds in addition to Union learning fund.</p>	<p><b>Enablers:</b></p> <p>&gt; Need for employers to listen to wants and needs of employees to ensure training opportunities useful and employee buy-in.</p>	<p>Employment support for those in work limited. Necessary to address in-work poverty and reliance on welfare benefits. Need for upskilling and support.</p> <p>Older people in employment forgotten but still in need. Learning may be orientated towards health and well-being instead of progression.</p> <p>Lack of employer engagement with govt. programmes on education and skills e.g. FE strategy and Success for Skills strategy.</p>
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<p>Invest NI</p> <p>See above.</p> <p>Use of wage substitution to compensate for staff training.</p>	<p>Wage substitution model found to be overly bureaucratic, issues around state aid rules. Have found simpler just to pay provider directly.</p>	<p>&gt; Not enough part-time provision available on evenings/weekend. Provision could make greater use of online learning.</p> <p>So far demand not sufficient to justify the investment, but potentially a chicken/egg issue.</p> <p>&gt; Limited availability of loans for part-time provision. Mainly indirect support in the form of grants to FE and HE.</p>
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**REFLECTIONS ON PROVISION**

<b>Influencing factors: barriers</b>	<b>Influencing factors: enablers</b>
<p>&gt;Funding for additional support / investment is limited - need to source funding in order to develop landscape &gt;Lack of executive in Northern Ireland and decision making is a big barrier to further development &gt;Important to consider contextual factors e.g. lack of well paying employers in NI.</p>	

<p>Lack of funding for VCS and FE and funding linked to '<i>very restrictive activity-based budgets</i>' e.g. numbers attending.</p> <p>Civil Servants attached to using activity based measures as KPIs as these are easier to measure.</p> <p>Department for the Communities (responsibility for community development and family learning), Department for the Economy (responsibility for skills), Department of Health (responsibility for health and wellbeing). Not explicit, but implied this has led to siloed funding/lack of coherent approach.</p> <p>Lack of framework/infrastructure to enable conversations between stakeholders.</p>	<p>Cross-agency approach taken by govt. to prevent funding in silos, ensure that provision is coherent and scale best-practice provision. Development of cross-agency model of funding and commissioning.</p> <p>At broad scale, working with employers to understand needs to make sure provision reflects what employers think is most important. Important for employers to also invest in developing future workforce.</p> <p>Involvement of VCS, greater understanding of personal development approaches and working with disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>At individual level, negotiated curriculums where employers have input as well as providers, funders and learners. Learner input important for buy-in/motivation.</p>
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<p>Course fee, transport, childcare and cost of living while learning very significant barrier to adult learning. Lack of availability of different loan options.</p> <p><i>"these are people who have lots of pressure and complexity, responsibilities in their lives, that they would have to make a decision whether or not to come to campus or to stay at home and pay the electricity. "</i></p> <p>Limits on numbers of full-time places at degree-level. Can make it difficult to fill a skills shortage by increase places e.g. for computing degrees.</p> <p>Level of funding available for HE and adult learning limited. "</p> <p>If we had more money I think the provision and the commitment is there but we don't always meet everything that we need to meet because we have a limited resource and capacity."</p> <p>Not able to conduct engagement activities with all or most access</p>	<p>Regulatory obligation to invest percentage of additional fee income towards access for underrepresented groups including low-income adults e.g. fee waivers.</p> <p>UU and 30 other institutions have formally recognised civic duties includes adult learning, will work in partnership with local government and other orgs.</p> <p>Clearly defined partnership roles for educational sectors and institutions. Important in context of limited funding to decide who has responsibility for what.</p>
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<p>Lack of learning from successful initiatives and lack of long-term funding to make them sustainable.</p> <p>May be cultural resistance or lack of long-term thinking on the part of employers resulting in lack of investment in skills and uptake of govt. initiatives.</p> <p>"But, you know, there probably is much more ability, capacity for take-up in that but, again, some employers have been resistant to that or basically saying, "We don't have the money to invest in training..."</p>	<p>Long-term and sustained programmes for deprived areas are needed to achieve impact.</p> <p>Discussions with employers around Futurepoint project have influenced employers to consider the impact they can make on labour market problems.</p>
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<p>&gt; Disconnect between FE and HE providers and industry. Lack of employability skills but also FE colleges noted as good providers.</p> <p>&gt; Low take-up by individuals and companies.</p> <p>&gt; Affordability of programmes to employers.</p> <p>&gt; Uncertainty about the ROI of training programmes. Particular concerns around staff retention and 'poaching'.</p>	<p>&gt; Greater communication between stakeholders with intermediary such as Invest NI. Collaborative support programme appears successful at linking business to FE/HE providers.</p> <p>&gt; Financial assistance helpful to reduce costs of training and increase potential ROI. Especially true for SMEs.</p> <p>&gt; Collection and use of case studies as tool to illustrate ROI of training.</p>
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<p>Difficult to report or evidence training and skills especially those acquired through non-traditional means such as community learning.</p> <p>Context of funding limitations in the public sector could lead to buck-passing when it comes to funding new initiatives. But positive about possibility of being "thrifty" with budgets to maximise effectiveness.</p> <p>Lack of coherent skills strategy and communication between stakeholders.</p>	<p>Govt. buy-in to the wider value of learning. Including learning which doesn't lead to formal qualifications.</p> <p>Unions role in mediating between employers and workers in relation to training. Can communicate concerns, facilitate dialogue about training needs and wants.</p> <p>Enable learners to collect and evidence learning experiences in one place.</p>
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<p>&gt; Psychological barriers to returning to learning when negative experience of mainstream schooling. Fear of failure/loosing face to colleagues.</p> <p>&gt; Affordability of provision. Open University noted as being unaffordable to those on low wages</p> <p>&gt; Limitation on scope of provision which Dept will fund. Provision only within Dept. for Economy responsibility if connected to productivity, increased employment. Focus on employer rather than individual needs.</p> <p>&gt; Attitudes of employers - believe that spending/staff time on training will make them less competitive.</p> <p>Limit funding and staffing within departments to fund and manage programmes.</p>	<p>&gt; Leadership within employers an important factor. Motivation to improve progression at very senior level.</p> <p>&gt; Training provided at employers' premises.</p> <p>&gt; Individual motivation - significant factor in employers behaviour. More motivated employees given better jobs, progression routes.</p> <p>&gt; Awareness of provision and available support e.g. loans.</p>
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	ADDITIONAL NOTES
<b>Recommendations for change:</b>	Other areas to explore following interview
<p>&gt;Government should have responsibility for funding provision - involvement of relevant departments e.g. dept for economy and communities</p> <p>&gt;Possible to make use of devolution e.g. city deals to fund / provide local solutions</p> <p>&gt;Support for employers necessary?</p>	<p>Key things to look at:</p> <p>&gt;Northern Ireland strategy for people with disabilities (focus on progression)</p> <p>&gt;Features of supported employment model</p> <p>&gt;Other relevant programmes/contacts from Dept for Communities</p>

<p>Development of infrastructure for conversations about best practice and sustainability between stakeholders including relevant Departments, providers in FE and VCS, employers and learners to develop interventions which best fit with all needs.</p> <p>Development of funding and commissioning model which uses holistic outcome measures rather than academic or activity-based outputs.</p> <p>Implied more funding should be allocated to a wider range of organisations e.g. VCS organisations in health sector and to non-traditional and holistic services. But also more funding for FE.</p> <p>Important to open up learning opportunities at foundation level to encourage learning and upskilling e.g. focus on potential of family learning across social and human capital</p> <p>For those not in employment/left behind by traditional education -</p>	<p>&gt; Which govt. departments fund relevant programmes, funding available, programmes they are funding and outcome measures used.</p> <p>&gt; Who are the non-government funders?</p> <p>&gt;Who are the providers in VCS, including in health and social care sectors?</p>
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<p>Discussions between stakeholders including employers and education providers, each organisation needs to have clearly defined role in partnership accord to their capacities e.g. available funding, staff time.</p> <p>A specific adult education strategy which encompasses all stakeholders. Also current Department of Economy strategy for adult learning only includes adults up to 55 years old. Due to ageing population this age should be increased.</p> <p>Increased funding to support adult learners on low incomes and for engagement with disadvantaged communities. Greater range of loans available to pay fees, transport and costs of living while working.</p> <p>Review of limitations on full-time places at degree level to ensure reflects labour market demand.</p>	<p>&gt; What's in current adult learner strategy/strategies?</p> <p>&gt; Current availability of loans, bursary for different kinds of provision and providers.</p> <p>&gt; Level of ESOL provision.</p>
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<p>Implied that govt. funding could be used to fund more innovative programmes such as those provided by VCS and private training providers with EU funding. May be learning from successful EU funding VCS projects.</p> <p>Employers need increase take-up of govt. initiatives or develop their own programmes potentially in collaboration. BITC engagement with employers positive, but need to reach out to other employers develop wider networks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; What work are sectoral bodies doing? e.g. Construction Employers Federation</li> <li>&gt; Passing reference to local councils. What work are they doing?</li> <li>&gt; Department for the Economy can provide list of providers of apprenticeship NI training.</li> <li>&gt; Other documents: IPPR research on skills system in NI, Skills Barometer NI, NISRA data on Social Output Areas.</li> <li>&gt; Other orgs: Catalyst.</li> </ul>
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<p>&gt; Mentioned that org. signposts businesses towards upskilling provision in third sector. Could be a need for greater publicity of available programmes and potentially a guidance resources which centrally lists available provision.</p> <p>&gt; Need for better communication between FE/HE providers and businesses. Greater input from business into FE/HE course offers?</p> <p>&gt; Implied incorporation of project-based learning into schools would be beneficial in terms of improving employability skills.</p>	<p>&gt; How are relevant programmes promoted beyond provider websites? Are there any overarching resources/guidance?</p>
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<p>Comprehensive training and learning record linked to NI number or a unique learning number.</p> <p>Increased communication between stakeholders, particularly between govt. and employers. Unions envisaged as having a key role.</p>	<p>&gt; Training and skills support offered through the larger unions (Unite, Unison) themselves rather than Union learning fund.</p>
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<p>&gt; Wider aspirations for a culture of life-long learning in NI, people better equipped to manage economic shocks and changes in career/jobs.</p> <p>&gt; Greater investment into flexible or online courses.</p> <p>&gt; See FE colleges as having significant role in developing provision going forward. NB. Department for Economy primary responsibility for FE colleges.</p> <p>&gt; Implied could develop capacity/provide support to enable colleges to conduct more and more effective employer engagement.</p>	<p>&gt; Limited awareness of in-work progression provision by Department of Communities. Reflective of comments above that communication could be improved between Departments.</p> <p>&gt; <a href="http://NIbusinessinfo.gov.uk">NIbusinessinfo.gov.uk</a></p>
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## SUMMARY

Key lessons from interview re: support gaps, effective provision and recommendations

Limited insight from interview, no evidence of progression-related initiatives from Dept for Communities.

Lessons/useful info:

- >One of central themes of Dept for Communities for people w/disabilities is focus on progression
- >Use of ESF funding?
- >Possible to make use of devo / city deals

Interviewee focused on quality rather than availability of support and value of more collaborative approaches at national policy level and in delivering provision.

Key factors in improving provision:

> More collaborative working between government departments to develop a coherent model of funding and commissioning.

> Shift to holistic outcome measures rather than activity-based outputs by gov't. Funding for wider range of orgs inc. VCS.

> Shift of focus from academic model (GCSEs) to broader social and human capital in design of education system. Entitlement

Interviewee emphasised value of collaboration between stakeholders. At the level of policy development (in relation to the skills strategy) and in the development and delivery of curriculum.

A number of structural and cultural barriers to positive change: government breakdown, poverty, insufficient funding, attitudes among some social groups (e.g. young men).

But listed a number of initiatives lead by the university as well as commitment across sector to improve access for low income groups.

Discussed wider range of labour market problems particularly low pay as well as disadvantaged groups such as economically inactive and people from deprived areas.

Focus on employers role to tackle labour market problems both by taking up available provision and by developing their provision potentially in collaboration with other employers, sectoral bodies etc.

Also discuss issues around funding and impact.

Programmes aimed at deprived areas and economically inactive not impactful. This could be due to limited long-term funding or lack of innovation in govt. funding programmes. Changes in funding landscape would be beneficial.

Interview focused on skills, mainly from employer perspective.

Argued sufficient support programmes in place but a lack of visibility to both employers and individuals leading to low take-up. Possibly lack of effective publicity/comms for programmes.

Employer attitudes towards FE and HE providers also a barrier. Provision not seen as meeting business needs.

Therefore, need for greater communication between employers and providers, potentially input into curriculum.

However, Invest NI seems to have had positive experience of acting as intermediary between employers and

Interviewee detailed a range of labour market problems with particular focus on in-work progression.

Provision supporting in-work progression limited.

Employers felt to be particularly at blame due to lack of investment in workforce and failure to engage with govt. initiatives.

Enablers for change, primarily greater communication between stakeholders. Ongoing role for unions in mediating between employers and workers in relation to skill matters.

Emphasised wide range of benefits to increased access to learning, including social outcomes such as health and wellbeing. Need for govt. and employers to value non-

> Focus on difficulties of engaging with employers. A lack of awareness of support available from Dept. among employers. Employers often resistance to investing in training. One approach to pitch programmes as primarily aimed at business development.

> FE sector thought to be key. In strong position to assess employer skills need and provide training. However, need more support to effectively engage with employers.

> At an individual level psychological and financial barriers to learning. Particularly the case for those with negative experiences of school/education. A need to change the perception of adult learning.

